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TAGS: PARM PREL KCFE OSCE RS XG

SUBJECT: FSC:RUSSIA BLASTS U.S. ON CSBM POLICY, U.S. AND
OTHERS ON ARMING GEORGIA

REF: A. USOSCE 212

1B. EMAIL WRIGHT-MEYER FROM OCTOBER 1

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Russia criticized what it called the "depraved" U.S. policy of linking all Russian initiatives in the FSC to "unrelated and secondary issues" such as Georgia and CFE. The U.S. position is "unreasonable," and "demonstrates that Washington has lost all interest in arms control." The U.S. restated standing guidance on new Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM)s, noting that recent Russian actions have raised serious concerns over Russia's commitment to collective security.

¶2. (SBU) In security dialogue, Russia blamed the August conflict in Georgia on participating States (pS) that contributed to systematic and unprecedented program of militarization by the "Saakashvili regime." Russia cited data from OSCE and CFE exchanges to support its accusations, and concluded by introducing a Russia proposal that would ban all pS from providing military assistance to Georgia. The Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Turkey, Lithuania, Georgia and the U.S. rebutted Russian allegations with strong interventions in support of Georgia's legitimate right to develop its armed forces. Many, including the U.S., questioned Russia's own culpability in arming separatist militias.

¶3. (SBU) In support of the Finnish Chairmanship's emphasis on SALW, three NGO,s -- Small Arms Survey, Saferworld, and GRIP gave presentations to the FSC. In Working Group (WG) B, the Estonian-Lithuanian proposal on a cyber security workshop gained wide support. The decision to hold the next AIAM on 3-4 March 2009 was agreed in WGA. See para 14 for guidance request. End Summary.

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Russia Blasts U.S. for "Depraved Policy on CSBMs
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¶4. (SBU) Russia (Ulyanov) launched into the U.S. during the 1 October FSC plenary, criticizing Washington's alleged policy to block all Russian proposals on new CSBMs. Referring to the U.S. comments in the 10 September FSC (Ref A), Ulyanov characterized as "depraved" Washington's linking of Russia's initiatives such as its proposed Rapid Reaction Force CSBM to CFE and Georgia. Ulyanov asserted that the U.S. dispenses its support for Russian initiatives like gifts, while it attempts to punish what it claims is poor behavior by opposing proposals. He criticized the U.S. for failing to engage productively on any of three key FSC topics that emerged from the Madrid Ministerial--Code of Conduct, SALW and CSBMs. Ulyanov characterized the U.S. approach as "totally unreasonable." He concluded that the U.S. had lost all interest in arms control, a serious development that will, he claimed, result in a significant imbalance in the work of the OSCE.

¶5. (SBU) In refuting Ulyanov's rants, the U.S. (Neighbour) underscored Washington's commitment to all existing CSBMs, which, when adhered to by all Participating States (pS), remain relevant to the security of Europe. Neighbour reminded pS that the U.S. assesses all new CSBMs against three criteria--significance, balance and verifiability. He pointed out, however, that recent Russian actions have raised

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serious concerns over Russia's commitment to collective security. He characterized Russia's apparent belief that its partners should simply ignore its miscalculations as unrealistic. The U.S., having great concern over Russia's recent decisions, is considering its position, including proposals for new CSBMs in the FSC.

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The Arming of Georgia
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¶6. (SBU) Ulyanov provided a multimedia presentation (distributed under FSC.DEL/154/08) purporting to prove that, with the assistance of several pS, Georgia had long engaged in an unprecedented military build up with the goal of forcibly bringing South Ossetia and Abkhazia back under Tbilisi's control. In support of his allegations, Ulyanov cited readily available data from various OSCE and CFE information exchanges illustrating increases in Georgia's defense budget and equipment holdings. The U.S. found itself among the long list of pS (Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Poland, Lithuania, Israel, Turkey and France) that had provided arms and assistance to Georgia since 2002. Ulyanov concluded that pS which provided military assistance to Georgia in spite of repeated Russian warnings had contravened OSCE principles enshrined in documents on conventional arms transfers and SALW, and shared responsibility for the August conflict.

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Russia Calls for Ban on Military Assistance
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¶7. (SBU) Ulyanov said that while one could understand the errors of the past, it was clear that pS must act now in response to voices calling for a rearming of Georgia. He appealed to all pS to heed Russia's warning and to adhere to principles to which all pS have committed. Ulyanov announced the distribution of a Russian proposal (FSC.DEL/155/08, Proposal for a Draft FSC Decision on Supplies of Conventional Arms and Small Arms and Light Weapons to Georgia,) which calls on pS to refrain from providing any military assistance to Georgia. Despite Ulyanov's call for its proposal to be placed directly on the 15 October plenary agenda, the Chair

(Kangaste, Finland) announced that Russia's proposal will be introduced in one of the working groups on 15 October in accordance with standard FSC rules and procedures.

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Rebuttal of Russian Charges
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¶8. (SBU) Georgia (Giorgadze) responded first, noting that Russia's presentation was based on data distributed to all pS in the course of normal OSCE information exchanges. He called on Russia to be equally transparent about its support for the separatist regions. Gioradze also countered that Georgia's increased military spending came on the wave of economic prosperity and a seven-fold increase in the government budget since the Rose Revolution. He added that over 50 percent of Georgia's military expenditures had gone to infrastructure and quality of life improvements, salaries and research and development. Finally, he referred to his

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briefing from the previous week to highlight a long list of Russian transgressions, and repeated Georgia's call for a full international investigation to determine "who is right and who is wrong."

¶9. (SBU) The Czech Republic (Reinohlova), Ukraine (Velchenko), Turkey (Gungen) and Lithuania (Kalibatas) rebutted Ulyanov's commentary by emphasizing Georgia's right as a sovereign state to determine its defense needs. They noted that there was no international restriction on sales of arms to Georgia, and that all transfers were transparent and in accordance with all international norms and procedures. Ukraine's Ambassador Velchenko noted that Ukraine had also provided military equipment to Russia and could not be certain Russia had not used Ukrainian equipment against Georgia. Summing up, Velchenko quipped that if Russia followed its own logic, Russia should be held accountable for every conflict in which Russian-made arms are employed.

¶10. (SBU) The U.S. (Neighbour) expressed full support for the previous interventions upholding Georgia's legitimate right to build and develop its armed forces. Turning to Russia's comments on U.S.-provided training, Neighbour noted that the U.S. had provided a summary of U.S. military assistance to Georgia in PC.DEL/763/08. He recalled that the initial U.S. decision to train Georgian military forces was made in response to a Georgian request for assistance in combating Chechen rebels in the Pankisi Gorge, a concern of Russia. Neighbour explained that follow-on training programs were designed to prepare Georgia to participate with coalition forces in Iraq as part of the Global War on Terror. He emphasized that these programs were fully disclosed in public documents and were in full compliance with international agreements and OSCE principles.

¶11. (SBU) Neighbour then asked whether Russia could claim as much, noting that by all appearances, Russia had provided SALW and heavy weapons to separatists. He invited Russia to explain how such weapons made their way into South Ossetia. Citing specific provisions of the OSCE documents on conventional arms transfers and SALW, he invited Russia to explain why the transfer of weapons to militias in the breakaway regions would not constitute a contravention of OSCE principles.

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SALW Round Table
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¶12. (SBU) In support of the Finnish Chairmanship's emphasis on SALW, three NGO's gave presentations to the FSC. Small Arms Survey, Saferworld, and GRIP praised the OSCE for its efforts in writing Best Practice Guides that have wide applicability and use, while calling for more action in the areas of transparency in information exchanges, brokering,

stockpile management (including both destruction of surpluses and improvement of storage practices), marking and tracing, and greater implementation of existing agreements in general, and of the UN PoA in particular. The Chairman of the OSCE Informal Group of Friends of SALW (Schweizer, Germany) reported on the Group's recent meeting, noting the possibility of greater emphasis in the FSC on brokering, end user certificates, tracing and potential integration of

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elements of SCA and SALW. Presentations for Small Arms Survey, Safer World and GRIP were distributed under FSC.NGO/3/08, FSC.NGO/1/08, and FSC.NGO/2 and 4/08 respectively.

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Cyber Security
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¶13. (SBU) The Estonian-Lithuanian proposal on a Cyber Security workshop found wide support in WGB. The U.S. (Meyer) requested two minor clarifying edits (changing "comprehensive approach" to read, "comprehensive OSCE approach(" throughout the proposal, and replacing "counter-measures" with "defensive measures" in the third point in the draft Annex. Canada (Gosal) suggested increasing the workshop from two to three days in order to accommodate more discussion. This proposal found no support.

The draft will remain in the WG while drafters finalize coordination on dates in March. The Chair expects to move for a Chairman's Draft Decision at the next WG, October 8. On the margins, Meyer discussed additional edits (Ref B) with Estonia (Tiigimae). Tiigimae indicated Estonia could support changing the emphasis of the first point in the Annex from "potential threats to cyber security" to "concrete steps to strengthen cyber security." Tiigimae will issue a Rev.4 before the next WGB. USDel will engage other missions to rally support for this change.

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AIAM Dates and HOV?
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¶14. (SBU) WGA agreed on the proposed dates, 3-4 March 2009, for the next Annual Implementation and Assessment Meeting (AIAM). FSC.DD/11/08 will be presented to the Plenary next week for adoption. Discussion will begin soon afterwards on modalities and agenda, including discussion on whether to hold a Heads of Verification meeting in conjunction with or sequentially to the AIAM. Mission requests guidance on Washington's position on a HOV meeting.
SCOTT